

Date: January 17, 2012

TO: DeKalb School Board and Administration

From: Brendon Gallagher, 4th Ward Alderman

City of DeKalb

RE: Improve Kiwanis Park property with transplanted trees from the City of DeKalb Tree Farm

Strategic Goal: Support projects that improve the City's appearance, neighborhoods and quality of life

Pursue Opportunities of mutual interest between the City and its Public Partners

Improve Community Appearance, Neighborhood Vitality and Quality Housing

- ***Continue to enhance the downtown and entryway corridors with appropriate aesthetic and image enhancing projects and programs***
 - ***Encourage the addition of more trees and other landscaping features along the corridors***

I. Summary

The property, commonly known as Kiwanis Park, is owned by CUSD 428. The property is currently maintained and used by the DeKalb Park District for soccer fields.

One project that is happening in 2012 with this property is construction of a bike path that will run parallel to Fairview Drive and give children a Safe Route to the new Huntley Middle School (formerly DeKalb High School). All costs for this bike path project are being paid via a Federal Transportation grant and City of DeKalb.

Another proposed project is the beautification of the park itself by planting 100 trees from the City of DeKalb tree farm in late 2012. Almost ten years ago, small saplings were planted near the DeKalb County Government Center (near Dresser Road and Annie Glidden Road). The trees have grown considerably and need a better location to mature properly. One idea that surfaced was transplanting these trees to Kiwanis Park.

Cindy Capek at DeKalb Park District requested that the trees be planted in such a way as to not obstruct the possibility of turning fields to preserve the grass conditions. Capek has indicated the additional trees will not be a burden as it relates to mowing or maintenance.

Decommissioning the DeKalb Tree Farm by spading out existing healthy trees will be beneficial on two fronts for the City of DeKalb: 1) give the trees a much better area to grow and mature; 2) helps give closure to our Tree Farm.

The School District benefits by improving the appearance of its property in the near term and perhaps in the longer term if a sale of this property were to occur.

II. Background

DeKalb Park District has utilized this School District property for many years as soccer fields and public space. Improvements to property have included a shelter area, fencing, some landscaping and gravel access roads.

Many parents, visitors and soccer players have been a part of the AYSO soccer games which are held on Saturday mornings in the Fall. Attendees know that shade is a precious commodity on some of those early mornings at this park.

III. Community Group/Interested Parties Contacted

Since this property is wholly owned by the School District and placement of trees will not burden homeowners, no communication has been attempted other than with City of DeKalb officials regarding trees and Park District regarding placement. By planting trees in late 2012, it would be ideal to work with Huntley Middle School students who are participating in a biology/science class unit that may be studying trees. They could help or become involved with this project as it relates to tree transplanting vs. cutting and removing.

IV. Legal Impact

None

V. Financial Impact

Cost of this project is estimated at \$30,000 (\$300 X 100 trees). Trees would be spaded out of existing location, relocated to Kiwanis Park, planted and watered to insure proper transplanting will occur. The City of DeKalb arborist would help with final inspection and pruning, proper placement and uniformity. City of DeKalb is asking School District to subsidize 30% of estimated bill or \$9000. Remainder of \$21,000 will be funded by City of DeKalb's General Fund.

However, this amount funded by City of DeKalb is subject to final approval by City Council for the FY 2013 budget. This project's successful funding would have a much better chance of being approved for this coming year's budget, if we were to gain support from District 428 at this time.

VI. Alternatives

DeKalb School Board may decide to not participate in this project at this time if it is financially unfeasible.

VII. Recommendation:

Approval of this resolution...with transplanting of trees to commence in late 2012.

Respectfully submitted for DeKalb School Board consideration